(d) and (e) The information is being collected from the Directorate of Sugar, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

(f) The Government of India reviews the situation of rising prices of essential commodities. With a review to control prices, the Government decided to ban the export of sugar with immediate effect. Accordingly, Directorate General of Foreign Trade issued Notification No. 18 dated 04.07.2006 imposing ban on export of sugar up to 31.03.2007. Barring this temporary restriction, sugar is freely exportable and no other measure is considered necessary to enhance its export.

Production of sugar

†167. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the production of sugar in the country during 2005-06;

(b) whether the present stock of sugar is adequate keeping in view its consumption in the country and its import is not required;

(c) whether Government have considered making import of sugar duty-free;

(d) whether the State Trading Corporation has been considered for partnership in sugar export; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The sugar production during sugar season 2005-06 (October—September) is estimated at 191.00 lakhs MTs.

(b) The information is being collected from the Directorate of Sugar, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

(c) Import of sugar is free. Department of Revenue *vide* Notification No. 63/2006-Customs dated 23.6.2006 has allowed import of White Sugar (Exim Codes 1701 91 00 & 1701 99 90) at zero duty upto 30.9.2006).

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) and (e) No, Sir.

Doubling of Indo-US trade

168. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether to improve Indo-US relation further, both the countries have agreed to double the trade from the existing $ 20 bn in 2005 to $40 bn in 2008;

(b) if so, whether the US has decided to place an official of Federal Aviation to promote civil aviation, a fulltime Intellectual Property Right (IPR) official for promoting pharma research and a fulltime official from the Treasury Department to work with the RBI for helping and building a deeper financial market with India; and

(c) if so, to what extent these steps have helped India to increase trade with US?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) In the India-US Trade Policy Meeting held in November 2005 in New Delhi, co-chaired by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Kamal Nath and the then United States Trade Representative (USTR) Mr. Rob Portman, both sides agreed that India and US will aim at doubling bilateral trade to at least US $ 40 bn by 2008.

(b) and (c) The US Department of State is known to have created these new posts in India and there are reports that they will be filled up soon.

Processing units by Tea Board

169. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Tea Board has decided to set up processing units in Assam to benefit small tea growers for better price;

(b) if so, whether such units are being set up in other tea growing States/places besides Assam;

(c) if so, which are those States/places; and